[Jesse Caswell letter/journal]

Singapore, Dec. 7, 1839

My dear parents, brothers, sisters, and other relatives;

I find by experience that I cannot expect to convey to you any satisfactory idea of the circumstances in which we are placed, the people among whom we reside, their manners, customs, &c. &c. by writing letters as opportunities occur for sending them. The time is not usually long after hearing of an opportunity before it is past. What letters are written must be written in a hurry and in such circumstances many things which would be the most interesting to you, escape our notice. But if I write from day to day what comes under my observation I shall do that which will be more satisfactory to you and less laborious to me. For it is really a great task to write a six, eight or ten letters in four or five days besides attending to our regular studies. I shall expect this journal, as long as I think best to continue it, to take the place of letters to a great extent in the circle of my relatives and thus none must feel hard if they do not receive letters from me. Still, I intend to write to individuals as I may fine time and strength.

In the first place I will say a few words in regard to things which are common to this country and to the United States. This seems to be a kind of general impression with some people that when you leave your native and especially if you go far away across the great waters, that you find yourself in altogether a new world – that you see, eat, feel, hear, taste nothing to which you have formally been accustomed.

To remove such an impression let me say that people live here by eating and breathing. They have the sky over their head and the earth under their feet. The sun, moon and stars rise and set here once in every 24 hours as in America. The color of the sky is the same here as in America. We have here mountains, hills and valleys, which for all the world look like those in Vermont. Trees grow and water runs here as well as with you.

But to be a little more particular, we have here horses, cows, goats, hogs, dogs, cats, geese, ducks, turkeys, hens, grasshoppers, crickets, ants in abundance, and not a few musketos [sic]. All the animals above here mentioned are common – seen every day. In the vegetable kingdom, few American productions are found. The ground is clothed with grass but it is not Vermont grass. You see trees in abundance and it great variety, but not one that is seen in Vt. We have vegetable and fruits in great plenty but they are all new, except those that are imported or nearly all. Cucumbers are raised here. They are [husked?] like peas. There is also a kind of pumpkin. The Irish potato of a poor variety is found in the market, but it is brought from Hindustan or China. But the place of the Irish potato is very well supplied by sweet potatoes and yams. The horses found here are what you call the Indian poney [sic], like those you see in caravans of animals exhibited in the U.S. only they are not often as small. The cows look like your cows in every respect except there is a hump on the shoulders. The geese are larger, have longer necks, are all white (I think) and the gander had something on the head, not wholly unlike the comb of a rooster. And at the same time not much like it. The ducks are larger than those of America. By the way, day before yesterday, being Thanksgiving in New England as near as we could calculate,

Mrs. Ballestier, the wife of the American consul here, sent us a roasted duck with an invitation to come and take tea with her. We all went. Nearly all the Americans in Singapore were present. There were twenty-seven of them, all missionaries except one, the captain of the ship in which Dr. Tracy goes to the U.S. There were present two English missionaries and the superintendent of their English seminary here. We sung "America" and some other pieces. Eighteen of this number have been or are expecting to be missionaries to Siam, viz, our company 12, Dr. Tracy and wife about to sail for the U.S., Mr. Lewis of the Bap. Mission here on business, and some expecting to proceed to the U.S. Mr. Reed of the same mission here for the health of her child, and Mr. Gottard and his wife, expecting to join the Bap. Mission in that country. All the rest expect Mr. Minor from Ceylon are stationed here.

Mon. Dec. 9, 1839

There is one very great convenience here that we do not have in American cities, viz, being able to do almost all of your trading at your own house. The practice is almost universal here among Europeans and Americans. The buy of native peddlers universally Hindoos [sic]. Since we have been here there have been one, or more of these peddlers at our house nearly every day. If they have not what you want, tell them what you wish to get and if it is to be obtained in the place they will bring it to you in a day or two. Shoemakers also, and tailors and cabinet makers (especially the latter) call frequently to see if they have any work for them to do. Mr. Sams called just as I finished the above to give us some information he has just received from Siam. Mr. Davenport one of the Bap. missionaries writes him that a short time after Mr. Sams left a man came to his house saying he was one of the princes' men and had been sent to request Mr. D. to go to the palace, stating that there were several English people there intimating that his services were needed to transact some business there. The man told him furthermore that he was requested to go by <u>land</u>. This aroused Mr. D's suspicions that all was not right. He told the man that he would go in his own boat. This the man strongly objected to, which made Mr. D. the more determined to go that way. Soon a man happened along who, they knew belonged at the palace and from him it was ascertained that the man was a deceiver. He apprehended the man and while they were taking him to the prince's he confessed that he was one 40 men who had come down the river with a view to plundering his house. If Mr. D. had gone with him by land they would probably have killed or disabled him and then gone to his house and plundered it.

Thus we see that missionaries sometimes have occasion to feel their dependence on their Master for protection.

<u>Evening</u>.

I will add to my list of American objects that are found here, rabbits, doves, and swallows. The swallows seem to be our common barn swallow. The doves are exceedingly numerous.

Whenever you go into the streets you [must never?] carrying burdens on the head. The Chinese if ever carry in that way; but the Hindoos do it almost invariably. Let the article be large or small, if not too large to be carried, it is placed upon the head. I have seen them with a plate of butter

on the head, and with a large earthen or stone jar of water. It is surprising how they can ballance [sic] burdens so exactly on the head.

Dec. 11, 1839

Ship [Skorance], Singapore Harbor

Just come aboard with the expectation of getting underway before morning. It is, I believe, just seven weeks since the boat came into the harbor. Two families, (kids), myself and wife, Dr. Hemenway and wife, and Miss Pierce, go – then remained to wait for another opportunity. Our accommodations than on board the Arno as to room. I presume that by tomorrow I shall be so seasick as to feel little disposition to write. It is now about half-past seven in the evening – it has just stopped raining – has rained incessantly all day – something very strange indeed in Singapore although there has been rains more than three fourths of the days since we arrived here. But the rains almost always come in what you would call May showers. One or two showers fall in a day and are immediately succeeded by fine pleasant weather. I am told that there is more or less rain more than two thirds of the days of the year.

I suppose that you are all now crowding around the stove to keep from freezing. But think of us. There have not been, I presume, not more than three or four nights since we have been in Singapore where we could have anything more than a sheet over us, or at most <u>two</u> sheets, and we sleep with over windows too. And this is the <u>cool season</u> too.

We have taken tea since coming on board – the mate, Mr. Presen [?] presided at the table. And appears to be a very agreeable man. Mr. Sams, who came from Siam in this vessel, says that he is quite seriously disposed. I believe he is a member of the Church of England. One thing which we find on board gives us much satisfaction. That is a good milch goat – so that we have the prospect of taking our tea and coffee with milk. We find also two kittens and a monkey – or rather baboon, which we expect will be fellow passengers.

I have just told Mr. Hemenway and Miss Pierce, who are in the room with me, that I thought I would write in my journal that I have a footstool worth five hundred and fifty dollars. The meaning of it is, that I am sitting with my feet on a basket that has that amount of silver in rupees, which is the price that we pay for our passage. It is rather a large price, but we could go no cheaper, and felt that we ought to go by the present opportunity. It is now nearly 9 o'clock and our furniture has not yet come aboard – there was great difficulty in getting <u>coolies</u> to work in carrying our boxes to [the] boat[,] which was to take them off to the ship. They complained of the <u>rain</u>, but I apprehend that they saw we were in a hurry to be off and thought if they worked rather lazily we would offer a larger price. It is very likely that they will not be off till midnight if before morning. This is one of the vexatious things we have to endure in a heathen country.

The more anxious you are to have your work done quickly the slower the men will do it that they may worry out of you a little more money out of you than you had agreed to give. The only way to get anything at all reasonably is to be entirely independent – to be able to dispense with whatever you want done, at least for a time.

Thusday, Dec. 12 5 pm

Still in the harbor. Have had ample time to get all our things arranged and ready for sea. None of our things came off till this morning. We were furnished with mattresses by the Capt. So that we spent the night quite comfortably. The ship is detained by some difficulty in getting the money necessary for purchasing a cargo. It seems as though there was a providential intervention in our behalf. Had the Capt. Been able to get off last night at the time appointed we should have been in very unpleasant and perplexing circumstances. We should have been under the necessity of doing one of three things – go back to Singapore and let the ship go without us, or go on and leave all our clothing, &c. except what we had on behind us, or detain the ship, which might have cost us fifty dollars, besides putting the officers out of humor. But as it is, we are under no such necessity. All our things are on board and in order.

Friday, Dec. 13th

At anchor about forty miles from Singapore – have thus far got along better than Capt. Jackson had expected. We are now at the Eastern entrance of the Straits of Singapore – wind at present against us. Anna has been very sick nearly all day. I have been on my back most of the time and have had several seasons of vomiting. The best remedy I find is to lie flat on the back.

English vessels furnish a much greater variety for the table than American vessels. As soon as it is fairly light in the morning a cup of coffee is brought to us in our rooms. At half past 8 we breakfast, at 12 take tiffin, or luncheon, at 3 pm dine, and at 7 take tea. This is the general practice throughout the East Indies.

Saturday, 14th Morning

Still at anchor – wind blowing strongly outside the Straits. The Capt. seems to be a very careful man – not disposed the run risks. The first two or three meals after coming aboard brandy and wine were placed on the table. All of us refused even beer from the outset and the officers have ceased to urge us. The Capt. and mate both drink warm and strong beer and the Capt. drinks a glass or two of brandy daily. The temperance reform has evidently not taken such hold of the English as it has of the Americans. There are some more notices I wish to make of Singapore. These I must make in the order in which they occur to my mind. And here I will say over all that that in this journal I do not to intend to consult order at all but shall write just as I happen to think of anything to write.

There is a small species of lizzard [sic] to be seen, often in great numbers, in the houses of Singapore and, I suppose also in all these countries. They are of a dark red color and about the size of the red [??] you sometimes find in the road after a shower in the summer. They crowd about the ceiling and live upon spiders and other insects. At first we did not much like the looks of them, but soon became reconciled to their presence, as they are perfectly harmless and of great benefit in keeping the house clear of spiders, ants, &c. by which you should be overrun were it

not for them. They are very timorous, seldom coming down low enough to be reached by the hand. In some rooms you will see a dozen or more. We had three or four in ours.

We had ants in great abundance. All kinds of eatables that are kept from day to day are put into a movable cupboard which has short legs. Each of these is set into a bowl of water, and thus the ants are completely fenced out. The dampness of the atmosphere is such in Singapore that shard, books, leather trunks, &c. in a short time become covered with mould [sic]. We made it our practice while in S. to wipe all our books every week.

Mr. Ballestire, the U.S. consul in Singapore has a sugar plantation about two miles out of the town. The poorest kind of molasses, such as will not sell for molasses, he makes up into rum. When will our rulers employ their influence for the salvation of their fellow men and not for their destruction? In many respects, however, Mr. B. is a valuable man. His family has been in S. about six years – came out in the Arno about the first voyage she made. He is engaged in mercantile business.

[page 17 map of Singapore and Malay Peninsula]

One the preceding page I have given you a rough map of the island of Singapore and the vicinity. The house we occupied is in the block of buildings which borders on Singapore River and lies next to the hill on which is the flag staff. The governor's house is on that hill.

Bukit Tima is the highest hill on the island. There is a good road all the way to it and indeed to the top of it. We were intending to take a ride out to it, but were told that it would not be safe on account of the tigers.

The island, except in the vicinity of the town, is mostly covered in jungle. There are, however, cleared spots scattered over it occupied by Chinese farmers who do much towards supplying the market of Singapore. Those found on plantations afford a firm refuge for criminals fleeing from justice, as the officers of government seldom pursue them into the jungle.

Every morning about break of day we used to hear the clanking of the chains of about hundred convicts as they were driven to their daily tasks. These convicts are not natives of Singapore, but are criminals who are brought here from the other British possessions in the East Indies as to a place of banishment. Their usual employment, I believe, is making roads. They commonly get through their tasks about two or three o'clock pm when they are marched back to their place of confinement, which is a yard containing several acres surrounded by a high wall. Each convict has his crime branded in his forehead. As I was viewing them in their yard one day, I noticed murder branded in the forehead of one man. They are most or all of them Hindoos. Five or six years since the population of the whole island nears 30,000, of which the town contains 20,000. The population is supposed now to be about 36,000. A great variety of people are found here but the population consists mainly of Malays, Chinese, and Hindoos. These three classes constitute altogether the majority. There are less than 200 English although they govern this island. There are perhaps twice as many Portuguese. These, as far as I have had opportunity of noticing, are house servants. Our cook in S. was a Portuguese and the steward of the ship in which we are now sailing is one. Their features are much like the English but their complexion is a dark mullatto [sic]. There are few Americans and a few Siamese in Singapore. The Malays are very much indeed like our American Indians in appearance. They engage but little in business having rather a desire for harvesting, fishing, &c. like the Indians.

The Hindoos are engaged for the most part in the lighter kind of business. They have quite a slender lady like form. A very large portion of them are engaged in trade. Very many are house servants to the English. All the dobies [sic], or washmen, are Hindoos. Nearly all who drive the palanquins of Singapore are Hindoos.

But altogether the most important class are the Chinese. These are emphatically the business men. None except the English are engaged so extensively in mercantile business. Many of the Hindoos are merchants but it seems to be on a small scale. Many of the Chinese, also, do small business, and many are wealthy and trade on a large scale. Then the mechanics, &c. are all Chinese. Perhaps some brief notices of a few different classes may not be uninteresting.

I will first speak of those who work in wood. Of these, some are engaged constantly in sawing out boards. All boards are made in that way, and can be obtained as cheap in Singapore as in the U.S. The cabinet makers use but few and very simple tools and yet do their work very well. Their planers are substantially as those used in the U.S. but not so perfect. Their turning lathes are of very simple construction. The contrivance for holding the timber to be turned is for substance like that of the lathes in the U.S. Their instruments for turning are also mostly like ours, but

there is no whist about the lathe. Over the head of the turner is a stout springy pole directly over the piece to be turned. To the end of this pole, a strong cord is attached which is passed twice about the timber to be turned. And then brought down and made fast to another pole which is worked by the foot. Thus prepared, you see that the piece on which a person is working will move half the time one way and half the time the other way. And yet the work is done very neatly.

Blacksmiths do their work very much as those in the U.S. You will often however see three men striking on the same piece of iron and as they are naked except about the middle one would suppose they would be often burning themselves. Their bellows is a tube six or eight feet long lying horizontally just back of the fire and is worked by pushing and drawing a piston on the principle of the pump.

Chinese tailors do their work very well, so far as sewing is concerned but are deficient in cutting. They always do best when they can have a pattern. Shoemakers are pretty good, or rather, I should have said tolerable. I have purchased two pairs of shoes for 75 cts. each. The Chinese boatmen row their boats by pushing the oars instead of pulling them. You always find in Singapore streets a number of traveling Chinese cooks. They carry about with them in a couple of large baskets slung across the shoulder by means of a pole, all their cooking apparatus – furnace, fuel, food, and dishes. They walk along the streets till someone calls for a meal, when they halt, and in a few minutes it is ready. The Chinese shave their heads except a portion around the crown a little larger than a person's hand. The hair on that part is never cut, but is braided down and tipped with silk. This tail commonly reach is down behind or nearly quite to the knees. When at work they do it up but at other times it hangs loose. I believe they usually shave their heads once in two weeks. They look very neat when newly shaved. The Chinese are a very large stoutly built race of people. Their color is a light copper bordering on yellow. Their hair is invariably black. There are only two Chinese women in Singapore and these I suppose were smuggled out of China as it is against the laws of the empire for a woman to leave it. The Chinese of Singapore have usually Malay wives. They are very industrious money-making people. I'm told that nearly all intend at some future time to return to China as they look upon that country as their home and their stay away from it as a kind of banishment. Their object in coming away is to get money with which to obtain a permanent settlement in China.

Wednesday Dec. 18th

Six days from Singapore and about 280 miles to the N.E. of it in the China Sea. We are obliged to take quite a roundabout course because we must sail against the N.E. monsoon. The wind does not blow steadily from the N.E. but varies from North to East. Bangkok from Singapore by the nearest route is about 800 miles. But we shall probably sail more than three times that distance. None but vessels built after European models pretend to sail against the monsoons. For two or three days after we got underway I had a pretty severe run of seasickness but have now nearly become free of it. A. has not been to the table since we sailed. Her sickness has been very severe and will probably will continue to be so until we get into the Gulf when we expect to have smooth sailing. Thus far the sea has been quite rough. The vessel we sail in is owned by a rich Hindoo in Bombay. The Capt. and mate are Englishmen – the crew are Hindoos. Hindoo

sailors are commonly called Lascars. They are excellent sailors – always ready and quick to do what they are told to do. They receive about $4.5 a month. The officers have to give their orders in the Hindoo language.

This vessel goes to Siam for a cargo of sugar. The Capt. tells me that the price of good sugar in Siam when bought by the large quantity varies from three and a half cents to four cents per pound.

Friday the 20th

The sailors are having a fine time. About half an hour ago it began to rain very hard and has rained constantly since. The sailors very soon strip themselves of most of their clothes to wash them. The water stands two or three inches deep on one side of the deck. They lay their clothes down and knead them as bakers knead dough, or pound them with their fists. Some tread them with their feet. They not only improve such opportunities to wash their clothes but to wash their bodies also. There is a little boy dipping water from the deck with a tin dish and pouring it on his head and body. The natives in Singapore bathe themselves very frequently in this manner.

There is a Chinaman on board who is a clerk of one of the principal Chinese merchants in Bangkok. The Capt. says he has on board about $35000 worth of goods belonging to him.

The sailors have turned out three geese and ten or twelve ducks to play in the water on deck. They are enjoying the liberty very much, flapping their wings and trimming their feathers.

The man who has the business of purchasing and taking care of the cargo is called the Naucodah, which is the same as our English super cargo. He is a Mahometan. He spends much of his time in smoking. Here is the form of his pipe.

[insert]

A is the bowl of the pipe, which holds the material which is smoked. This is a composition of tobacco, sugar and, perhaps, some other substances. B is a hollow earthen ball about the size and shape of a large goose egg and contains water. C is the stem. All the smoke, you see is drawn through water. The stem is about the size of a man's little finger and about 18 inches in length. When he smokes he sits and rests the ball containing the water on the floor or whatever he sits upon. He has a servant who fills his pipe for him, brings it to him and carries it away when he has done smoking.

Saturday 21st

This morning, at breakfast, the question was started, how many nations or races of people are represented on board our vessel? The result was that we have on board persons of ten different nations, (viz) English, Americans, Spanish, Portugues [sic], Hindoos, Africans, Malays, Javanese, Siamese, and Chinese. There are fifty seven in all. Of the Spanish, Malays, Javanese,

Siamese and Chinese there is one each. The Malay is the woman who went to America with Mr. Joneses children and who came with us from Boston to Singapore. We have hired her to go and live with us in Siam. She is little over forty years old, very attentive and faithful. She speaks Malay, Portuguese, Bengali, English and a little of several other languages. She is a Roman Catholic by profession, but seems very little trammeled by their superstitions. She attends regularly our morning and evening prayers. She says her name is Isabella Robinson, that probably being the name with which she was baptized; but we call her Siah, (pronounced precisely as we pronounce the latter part of Isaiah.) The word Siah means nurse, and this is her employment, although, contrary to the common customs of this part of the world, she will do anything we wish her to do. She sews very well, though rather slowly.

The Siamese is a young man I should suppose 18 or 20 years of age who came from Bangkok to Singapore with Mr. Robbins. When Mr. Robbins left for America he requested us to take him back to Siam with us. I can talk a little with him in Siamese. I have him come into our room every morning at prayers when I instruct him in the Christian religion, by means of the Malay woman, as he understands Malay. I first tell her and she tells it to him. He seems quite attentive. I have just finished explaining to him the attributes of God, such as His omnipotence, omnipresence, &c.

Saturday evening Dec. 22nd

Today we had social worship twice in my cabin. The Capt. and mate attended in the morning service, and both kneeled during prayer, though, so far as I am able to see, neither of them gives any evidence of a change of heart. Indeed the Capt. makes no pretensions to being a Christian. The practices of kneeling at prayer I noticed while at the West was much more general among the [impertinent?] than in the N. England states. After dark I went on deck and had a long conversation with the Capt. on religion. He is sensible of the importance of giving his attention to it, but says the temptations of a seafaring life are too strong for him. He has a mother in England who, I should think from his representations, is a praying woman. I much fear that he will lose his soul. He habitually drinks beer, wine and brandy, though he has not been intoxicated since we have been on board. He and the mate are really very polite and kind to us. They supply us with everything we need which it is in their power to give us. We, of course, feel interested in them.

Monday the 23rd

Lat. 6 degrees 45' North. This is the eleventh day since leaving Singapore harbor. During the last 24 hours we have sailed 100 miles on our course, and during the 24 hours immediately preceding 75 miles. We are now sailing at the rate of seven miles an hour. We expected to be at least 25 days and most probably 30 on the passage. But the prospect of now is that we shall be less than 20, which will be unusually quick for this season.

I am sure you would get quite out of patience with an English dinner. You may take our dinner today as a fair specimen. First we had chicken soup. Then, the soup plates being removed, the principal dish came on, which was roast duck with potatoes, yams, and other things suitable

thereunto. Then the plates being changed, we had rice and curry. Then came on a pudding made of sweet potatoes, and, lastly, bread and cheese. For each of these courses, we had a fresh set of plates, knives, and forks. Then it is the custom to sit at the table talking till the table is cleared and as much longer as you choose. I suppose we are usually at the dinner table from three quarters of an hour to an hour.

If you could once take a look at the variety of edibles we have, you would never entertain any fears of our dying of starvation at least as long as we are on board an English ship. I will give you a list of articles of food which I recollect to have been on the table.

Salt beef, salt pork, ham, chicken, duck, goose and fish. Three or four kinds of sea break and cakes, rice in the form of common boiled rice, rice puddings, and rice cakes; pumpkin puddings and pumpkin cakes; Irish potatoes (very fine), sweet potatoes, yams, cucumbers, plantains and pineapples. We have every day on the table good butter and cheese, strawberry jam, and what are called mixed pickles, which are very small cucumbers, onions, beans, and some other things put up in glass jars with highly spiced vinegar. This comes from England as also does the strawberry jam and many other articles of food. Once or twice we have had pickled [?] brought from England, very fine. There is scarcely anything eatable which England affords which is not to be obtained in Singapore, at an extravagant price, of course. Even turnips and carrots already boiled and put up in jars in England are to be obtained there.

Tuesday 24th Lat. 9 degrees 15' North – in the Gulf of Siam – sailed 182 miles in the last 24 hours – wind remarkably fair – the prospect is now that we shall reach the mouth of the river in two days more. Should we do so I presume it will be the shortest passage ever made against the monsoon – only 14 days. This morning the Captain remarked that he should like to take missionaries with him wherever he went if they would always bring as fair a wind. This puts our in mind of those who followed Christ because of the loaves and fishes. Many a man nowadays would be a most devoted follower of Christ in the eye of the world, could he but be sure of lining well his purse by it. The Capt. is exceedingly kind; oh that he manifested as much respect for our master as he does for us.

A conversation I yesterday had with Mr. [?], the mate, helps us to form some opinion of the character of Dr. Bradley as a missionary. "Dr. Bradley," said he, "is for all the world just such a man as a brother of mine – a regular 'blue light.'" "Ah," said I, "what do you mean by a blue light?" "I mean," said he, "one who is so zealous in religion as to be talking about it with everyone he sees." He remarked that his brother had almost turned preacher. He would preach to the sailors and preach to his captain even. He remarked that some of his other brothers would hardly visit him because, as they said, when they wished to be talking about home, he would have the Bible and talk about religion. O, when will the time come when all Christians shall be so full of the spirit as to find it easier to talk of religion than of the world?

Wednesday Dec. 25th – Christmas – Have sailed 100 miles the last 24 hours, but during most of the day since nine or ten o'clock we have been nearly becalmed. I think we shall hardly reach the bar at the mouth of the river tomorrow. We do not expect to go up to Bangkok in this ship, as at this season of the year the captain says it would take several days to do it. He expects to anchor

just outside a sandbar which lies before the mouth of the river and about seven miles from it and then send up to Bangkok for a large boat to take us up.

Saw several porpoises playing around the ship and among them a swordfish frequently leaping entirely out of the water.

Thursday the 26th Lat. 11 degrees 13." Long. 102 degrees 36.' Have sailed but about forty miles. The weather has been very squally and the wind variable whenever there was any of it. There is a prospect now of better sailing for the next 24 hours. This is the 14th day from Singapore. About 200 miles to the mouth of the river. Ever since we entered the Gulf A. has been able to take most of her meals at the table, owing to the smoothness of the water.

The two little kids we have on board often remind us of home by their cries which are almost precisely those of lambs. A good goat costs in Singapore about fifteen dollars and the Capt. tells me that they cost the same in Bangkok. He offers to bring us one from Bombay when he comes next year, if we wish. There they cost only fifteen rupees, which is a little less than seven dollars. He would doubtless be willing to bring one for its milk on the way. Their milk is considered much better than that of the milk of a cow.

Frid. 27th Lat. 11 deg 53' Long. 101 degrees 45' Have made about sixty miles – considerable of the night nearly becalmed. About ten o'clock a.m. a fine breeze sprung up from the southward which till now (about sundown) has brought us forward at the rate of about six miles an hour.

I took an observation today with a quadrant and calculated the latitude for the first time. I made it precisely the same as the Capt. and mate. It is a very simple matter indeed.

This afternoon we have seen I presume a dozen water snakes, not larger usually than the common striped snakes of the U.S. and of a brownish color. A Chinese junk is in sight, bound as we suppose to Bangkok.

You notice I put a G in the word which has formally been spelled Bankok. The natives always spell and pronounce it with the G and so also do all the missionaries now. The natives do not call their country Siam, but Ti. They usually join Mooung (country) with it. Moouang-Ti is Siam country. And cone ti a Siam man, "cone" meaning man.

Sat. morning 28th Within 20 miles of the anchorage. The Gulf is so narrow here that the land can be seen on both sides. The shore on both sides seems to be, for the most part, mountainous. The wind is directly from the south and we expect to be lying at anchor in a few hours. As soon as we come to anchor the Nacodak will start with a boat for Bangkok. One of us could go with him if we choose but we prefer spending a quiet Sabbath on board the ship. It may be three or four days before we get up to B. We shall send letters by the Nacodak to the missionaries there that they may have time to prepare a place where to lay our heads.

Two or three days since which in conversation with the Captain, he said, "Caswell, do you mean to say that you have no expectation of ever returning to your native land?" I remarked I had no

expectation at all of ever doing so. "Well then," he replied, "I believe you are a sincere Christian." This goes to illustrate the importance of missionaries going out for life. There are many men of the world who came out to the E. Indies to spend a few years, make a fortune and then return home and enjoy it. And when a missionary comes out, as do many of the English missionaries, for a limited period with the expectation of their returning, they attribute to similar motives. But when a man goes to spend his life among the heathen, they cannot understand it. And how else are we to convince the heathen of our sincerity and our desire for their good? A missionary may perhaps do more towards this by his death than by his whole life besides.

Six o'clock evening – We came to anchor at five o'clock about seven miles from the mouth of the river. The Nacodak has just now started in a boat for Bangkok. There's another ship lying at anchor about half a mile off from us, a Bombay ship. The Capt. says she has a very fine boat with 16 oars which he thinks he can get for us to go up in, and if so, we shall not be obliged to wait here till ours comes from Bangkok for us.

It is just about 25 weeks or 175 days today since we left the wharfs in Boston, 47 days of which were spent in Singapore. Tomorrow, being the Sabbath, we shall spend on board the ship and I hope we shall be disposed to keep it in a manner becoming those who have so much occasion to render thanksgiving and praise to the Lord of the Sabbath for his unnumbered mercies shown us.

Sabbath eve Dec. 29th I have had a very comfortable day. Yes, however strange it may seem to know not the sources of the Christian enjoyment, I can say here on board this ship, surrounded by those who either know not, or, if they know him, despise my master. Sixteen thousand miles from the land of my birth, in full sight of a land among the millions of whose inhabitants not twenty are Christians, here in such circumstances I can say I rejoice. I am glad I have left my father's lands, my large circle of relatives whom I need not say I love, my country and all its privileges, I am glad that I am here. And that there is some prospect of being permitted to spend the remainder of my days in speaking of Jesus to those who know him not. I know there are trials of various kinds for me. There is a residence, and one of the most despotic governments on earth where we shall constantly be witnessing scenes of oppression without liberty saying ought against them. We shall be gradually wasting away under the enervating influence of a tropical climate. We shall live among a people scarcely one of whom we can place the least confidence in – whose word can be believed only when it is in their interest to tell the truth. But "none of these things move me." I verily believe that I came here by the direction of my master whom I serve. And I believe it will be seen in another world if not in this, that it was not for nothing that he has sent me here. The [?] I have with him trusting that I have a thankful heart that he keeps me from any anxious solicitude concerning it.

[insert pics from pg 45]

Mouth of the river meinam and the adjacent jungle from the place where our ship anchored, the mouth of the river bearing a little west of north. This is a view of the land lying to the East and S.E. from the ship, [highest?] about 35 miles distant. There are two or three islands lying much nearer. A town called Bamplasoi is situated among or near the mountains where Mr. Robinson spent five months not long since on account of health.

You will say perhaps that the first sketch has not much of the appearance of the mouth of a river. You will say I have made land entirely across the river. And so there is as it appears from the ship at such a distance. The river at its mouth is about three miles wide as the Capt. says. It is in the middle of the sketch. The land which appears lower than the rest is not in fact lower but is further off. Going up the river, before you reach that, you turn to the right around a point of land which is not distinctly discernable from the ship, and then you soon reach Packnam a large town situated about six miles from the entrance of the river.

I have seen, I suppose, not fewer than 25 small sailboats this morning, "Monday" near the mouth of the river. I suppose they belong to fishers. I have also seen a number of whales spouting from a half to a mile and a half distance from us. We saw several yesterday, one of which came within ten rods of us and afforded us the best view we have ever had of one. Whales are very numerous in the Gulf. I suppose it is owing to the multitude of small fish here upon which they live.

The sailors are busy today, some in throwing overboard stone and sand which we brought as ballast, and others in painting the ship. We are waiting for a boat to come and take us up to Bangkok. We may have to wait two or three days.

Tuesday Dec. 31st For several days past we have scarcely taken a meal without the subject of temperance being introduced, and almost always too by the officers. The Capt. evidently feels ashamed to be seen drinking beer, wine, and brandy while we take only cold water; and so talks to prop himself up. The mate seems pretty well of the soundness of the principles of our temperance societies and almost persuaded to act accordingly. This morning at the breakfast table he and the Capt. referred to some passages of scripture to seem to them to speak favorably of wine. I related the story of the Rekabites. They would not believe there was anything like it in the Bible, so after leaving the table, I turned to the 35th chapter of Jeremiah and read it to them. They were surprised. And just as I read the last verse where God promises that the family of the Rekabites should never become extinct because of their adherence to the injunction of their father – Mr. Pruine the mate exclaimed "I'm convinced – I'll break off wine but I don't know about beer."

Last evening we fell into conversation about the government of the U.S. during which the Capt. expressed it as his decided opinion that our govt. could not stand fifty years longer. The mate did not feel so sure, though he evidently sided with the Capt. I referred to the success of the temperance reform as the evidence that we are able to govern ourselves. The mate candidly acknowledged that a people who have so much virtue as to be able to recover themselves to wonderfully and completely from the power of intemperance, due certainly give evidence of an ability to govern themselves in other respects.

Sun half an hour high in a boat which Mr. Robinson sent out for us sailing rapidly towards the mouth of the river, which is now just about a mile from us. Mr. Robinson wrote a line informing us that he would be in Paknam with a covered boat to take us up to Bangkok. There are three or four of the boatmen that are Siamese – they look much more intelligent than the boatmen of Singapore and indeed, than of most of the natives that we saw there. All that I have yet seen of

the Siamese has made an impression altogether in their favor, and all that I hear tends to strengthen that impression.

We have just seen the sunset for the last time in 1839 and we are now entering the mouth of the river. Instead of being three miles wide as the Capt. said, it is, I should judge, a little less than a mile.

Wed. Jan. 1, 1840 I wish you all a happy new year. And you may well conclude that we are quite "happy" to be able to say that we have found the end of our journey. Yes, here we are in Bangkok. We left old "ocean" and the old year behind us at the same time. We arrived in Paknam, about two miles from the mouth of the river, at about half past eight where we found Mr. Robinson waiting for us. We went aboard the boat he had brought with him, which belongs to the chief man among the Roman Catholic priests in Bangkok. There we took a cup of tea and ate a piece of an apple pie which sister R. had baked on a large tin pan after the American fashion – a real treat, be assured. We then threw ourselves on the matted floor, some to sleep, and the rest to talk, waiting for the rising of the tide which would enable us to go through a canal of about a mile in length which saved about ten miles. About half past eleven, after having had a season of social prayer, we started and by the aid of 11 rowers arrived here at half past four this morning. Thousands of roosters had just begun their morning song period. Ann and I were soon comfortably lodged in bed at Br. R's. Br. H. and wife an Miss Pierce went to Dr. Bradley's which is the next door. Dr. B's and Mr. R's houses are situated right on the bank of the river. Afternoon. We have concluded to live in a part of Dr. B's house and Br. H. lives with Mr. Robinson. Miss Pierce lives with Dr. Bradley.

Thursday Jan. 2, 1840

On the opposite yonder I've given you a map of Bangkok and its vicinity. The thru canals are navigable for the whole distances only in high water, or during the high tides. Two of them are represented as being larger at their ends than in the middle, as they really are, because the middle is the highest, and when the water falls the water runs both ways from the middle.

The dotted line around Bangkok may be looked upon as constituting the limit of the city, or as showing the extent to which houses are built in a manner somewhat compact. The whole ground enclosed by this line however is not compactly settled but all along the water courses and for a considerable distance back from them, houses are built very close together.

Frid. 3rd You can form no conception of the multitude of crows which are found here. From break of day till dark at night there is a constant cawing. And the crows here are as tame as the tame crows among you. They frequently sit on the trees in the yard for a long time and occasionally they are so bold as to come into the houses and take away articles of food.

Yesterday I went with Mrs. Bradley, Robinson and Hemenway to pay a visit to the Prak Klang or minister of foreign affairs. It is customary for all foreigners to do so soon after their arrival, as a mark of respect. He was not at home – had gone to Bang Pla Soi. When we learned this we went to visit his brother who was the Prak Klang when our missionaries first came. He was

sitting on a platform raised about three feet from the ground under a shed where were several carpenters at work on the timber for a building. He was erecting for a dwelling for himself. We all took off our hats and sat down on a piece of timber two or three rods from him where Dr. Bradley told him who we were. He asked a few questions about us and our wives after which Dr. B. requested liberty to visit a wat or temple which belongs to him. The king and noblemen lay out their money in building wats instead of making roads, bridges and other works of public utility.

It has been said there is no chance to walk in Bangkok. This is not correct. One may walk as much as he pleases and on a good dry walk too. He cannot walk in all directions; it is true; but there is room enough in some directions. A common mode of making a road is to elevate a ridge about four feet wide in the middle of the street and pave this with brick or tile. If you keep on this walk there is no danger of being wet; but if you choose to go to the right or to the left you can have the privilege of doing so and also of wallowing with the pigs in the mire.

About four o'clock p.m. I went across the river with Dr. B. where he goes four times a week to distribute tracts. He gave to none but those who asked for them and who took pains to come up a pair of stairs to the second story of the house where he distributed. I know not to how many he gave tracts but during the hour and a half that he spent there, there was constantly a crowd importuning for tracts and he was distributing as fast as he could and have a little time to converse with each person. On the Sabbath he spends three hours there and preaches to them.

A week ago last Sabbath he met with the strongest opposition he has ever witnessed. A man who had read most of their books called before the time of commencing the distribution and asked for a tract, and then said that as the people had not collected, he would tell the doctor what he had heard a day or two before at the palace. He said he heard a decree issued there that if any man read our books and kept them in his house, his house should be pulled down and, if he persisted in reading, he should be beheaded. Dr. B. laughed at him for making up such a story and told him that the houses the missionaries live in they rent of the king and the house he was distributing tracts in was rent of one of the princes; and "who then" said Dr. B. "who will believe your story?" But he persisted in affirming even so and when the people came together he warned them against receiving the books, telling them of the decree and also saying that the missionaries were preaching Jesus Christ and were bringing all the splendid temples of Siam into disrepute. At first the people knew not what to make of it. But finally they began to crowd around the doctor and begin to receive tracts as fast as ever. They even crowded so closely as to push the man [to] one side. This enraged him and he forced his way through the crowd to Dr. B. and continued his angry vociferations. The doctor took no notice of him but continued to talk to the people and continue to give tracts though he strongly suspected the man would strike him. After a while he said to him, "If your story is true why have you asked for and taken a tract yourself?" The man replied he did not intend to carry it home and immediately tore it up.

He however stayed until the rest were gone and asked for another saying he would read it secretly. One was given him. The next Wed. Chao Fah told Mr. Davenport one of the Baptist missionaries that the king had just degraded an officer of government below the common people for telling the people that he (the king) had forbidden them to read our books when there was no

such thing, and for representing him as our enemy whereas he was our friend, and thus using the king's name in vain. Whether this was the man mentioned above we know not; but be it as it may, it shows that there is not a persecuting disposition among those who are in highest authority. Chao Fah is next to the king in authority, and is a great friend of the English and Americans.

Priests frequently call to obtain tracts. Some of the wats have five hundred priests. They all dress in cloth of a yellow or copperas color. They teach the children to read in the wats. The missionaries say that it is surprising to see how large a proportion of the people can read. They say they can scarcely find a boy that cannot read.

Evening. Chao Fah has just called to see us. He is the highest prince but dressed just like other Siamese so that one who is not acquainted with him would be unable to know that [he] was anything more than a common man, unless he should see other Siamese in his presence as in that case he would see them on the ground. Chao Fah speaks English very well. He appears to be 32 or 33 years of age.

Sat. 4th Visited Chao Fah in company with Brs. Robinson and Hemenway. The first thing we noticed on entering the palace grounds was the clanking of chains on the feet of men. Those who thus wear chains, I believe, are such as have been taken prisoners in war, or, convicted of crime. The servants inside the palace had no chairs on. The prince received us after the American manner. He takes delight in treating the missionaries according to the customs of their own country. He met us at the door, invited us in, showed us his library and cabinet of curiosities after which he invited us to eat with him. His table was set after the American fashion. He presided, pouring the tea and coffee himself. His wife, who was present all the time we were there, has a very interesting countenance and seems to take much interest in foreigners. She inquired why the ladies did not come and said they must come and visit her. The prince was perfectly familiar and we felt as easy in his presence [as] we should in the presence of any respectable man in America. His library consists chiefly of English books and nearly all, if not quite, of a good character. Most of them are such as have been given or sold him by missionaries or captains of English vessels. I noticed the Encyclopedia of Religions Knowledge, Chouli's [?] History of Missions, Modern Europe - Encyclopedia Britanica and many other valuable works.

Sabbath Eve

Preached to an Eng. And American audience – of twenty-two – 15 connected with the two missions and seven Eng. merchants and officers of vessels. Text – "It is high time to awake out of sleep." I pray that the H.S. may make the word powerful to the awakening, conviction and conversion of these men who, while they bear the Christian name, dishonor it and misrepresent it before the heathen.

Wed. Eve Jan. 8th

Just returned from a conference held at Dr. Davenports of the Bap. mission. The members of the two missions meet together on every Wednesday. The missions are two miles apart. The

brethren take turns in alphabetical order in leading the meeting and the meeting is held at the house of the brother whose turn it is to lead. We start so as to get to the place of the meeting the sun about an hour high that the sisters may have a prayer meeting by themselves. At early candlelight we take tea, immediately after which the meeting is held. We get through about eight o'clock, and, then, after taking a few minutes get into our boat and are at home about nine. These meetings are precious.

I saw this evening a couple of mice perfectly white. They were in a cage inside of which were a couple of wire wheeled cages some like those that squirrels play in in the U.S. but very small and the wires so far apart as to allow the mice to go out and in. They were taught to jump into these little cages and turn them around like squirrels. They came from China.

Yesterday afternoon and evening Dr. Robinson and myself and all of the ladies except Mrs. Bradley visited at Chao Fah's, the highest prince of the kingdom. We were entertained with music, viewing his library, museum and garden. We took tea in American style, the prince himself pouring the tea. He would be glad to have his wife sit at the table with himself, I presume, but it would be too great an innovation. He and the king and one or two others who wish to introduce improvements have to stem a very strong tide of public sentiment sitting against them. They are often accused by many of the noblemen of a desire to change the religion of the country.

While at the Prince's I suggested to him that it would be a matter of some interest if he would keep an exact account of the state of the weather, the amount of rain which falls, &c. He immediately requested me to superintend the making of a rain gauge, and today he sent his boat for me. I went and the thing is well underway. At the same time Mrs. Robinson went at his request to show his wife how to make wheat bread. She remarked as we came away that she had been well paid for going as she found there a kind [of] earthen oven which bakes much better than anything she has before seen in Siam, and the Prince offered to have one made and sent to her. I saw there a species of ducks as large as our largest geese.

We go through no more ceremony in visiting him than we would in visiting one of our own countrymen – no bowing and cringing. Of course we pay him respect as we ought to do. For instance we take off our hats when we come into his presence and we wait for him to ask us to sit down before we do it, although he does not require us to do it.

He remarked last evening that he had been trying to convince his wife and servants that there are no ghosts but could not. A short time since a ghost was seen in a certain room in his palace – for several nights in succession and none of his servants dared to go into the room. Chao Fah himself entered and caught the ghost, one of the servants, and gave him a sound drubbing.

Frid. 10th Went this afternoon to see Dr. B. cut [off] a cancer from the face of a Chinaman. He had to take off nearly all of one side of the face. I presume what was cut off would weigh a pound. During the operation he requested us to pray for him though it is not known that he is any other than a heathen – those whom the Dr. has cured often appear very grateful. The other day a Siamese priest whose sight had been partially restored brought the doctor several wax

candles and also some incense papers such as they burn in their temples, as a mark of gratitude. May we be enabled to benefit the souls of this people as well as their bodies.

This morning we visited the Prak Klang, as he was not at home when we went to see him before. Most of the questions asked us seemed to be aimed at ascertaining whether Americans have any connection with the English or not. The English have rendered themselves very odious to the Chinese by persisting in selling opium contrary to law, and the government of Siam sympathizes very much with that of China. The government of Siam also is making strenuous efforts to suppress the opium trade. Several have already been beheaded. The king is acting a decided part and we are glad to see it. The English residents here are known to be engaged in the trade, but according the treaty the king can do no more than take all the opium he may happen to find in their possession and burn it. I think we succeeded in making the Prak Klang that he need not suspect Americans, since all the opium, or nearly all comes from the British possessions in the E. Indies and none from America. After conversing a little he invited us to visit his garden. It is large and laid out very handsomely. I noticed cabbages growing. The Prak Klang frequently sends the missionary families a find head of cabbage.

Today I commenced teaching a boy about fifteen yrs. of age English. He is a brother of Coon Sit's wife. Coon Sit is a son of the Prak Klang.

Mon. 13th Today we have been very busy unpacking our things. We did not get our things from the ship till Sat. afternoon. The reason is that the ship ran aground in entering the river and lay there for several days before she could got off.

As Dr. B. was doing some business with Chao Fah today, the prince took him aside as if to communicate something of importance. Dr. B. began to fear that he had some bad news to tell him, and the moreso because we have had some slight fears that the coming of so large a number might excite the jealousy of the king. The prince said "I hear that the king" and then hesitated. This seem to confirm the fears already excited. Finally the prince said that he understood that the king said he wanted to get an American officer. Dr. B. asked "What kind of an officer?" The prince replied he did not know but thought it might be a captain of one of his ships. He thought an American captain would be an honest man. Dr. B. told him that he thought there were good Americans who would come if the king would hold out sufficient encouragement. – We have almost daily increasing evidence that the government regards Americans in a favorable light. Dr. B. has done much towards producing this state of feeling. About a year ago he wrote a treatise on the smallpox which is very prevalent here in which he showed that its effects might be made much less disastrous if instead of taking it in the natural way men were to be inoculated for it; and he proved it to the king's physicians by experiments in numerous instances. The king made a present to the doctor of 250 ticals or $150.

Yesterday I went with Dr. B. to the tract house. He distributed to about 200 persons in the course of two or three hours and never left his seat, giving to known but those who asked for them.

Jan. 16th This evening commenced teaching the hired men to sing. They had learned from the brethren to sing a few tunes tolerably; but we wish them to sing correctly and therefore I'm making the attempt to make them to sing by note.

One of the men who work in the printing department, named Boaah we have reason to believe is a real Christian. Sometime since he requested baptism he knows a large number of hymns and sings a great part of his time. He said today that six young men have lately requested him to teach them to sing. He said also that there are two others who wish to be baptized.

Went today to see a house near Dr. Bradley's, belonging to Mr. Hunter, and English merchant and the only one in Bangkok. The other English residents are in his employ. We think of hiring the house for Mr. Hemenway and myself to live in. He asks $15 per month. We can take possession the first of next month if we consent to his [offer], as I think we shall.

Wed. Jan. 22nd We have engaged the house mentioned above. We bought today two large earthen jars holding from a third to a half a barrel each, and eight smaller ones holding about a third as much as the larger ones; all for a little less than four dollars. Eight of the largest we intend to have filled soon with water and set aside for use when the river becomes lowest because at that season the water of the river becomes a little saltish owing to the salt water sitting far up the river at high tide. The other jars we shall keep to settle water in from time to time as we wish to use it. In all seasons it had to stand a day or two before it is fit for use.

Last Sabbath Dr. Bradley spoke to the people at the "tract house" on the parable of the sower. On Monday morning Booah told Dr. B. that after he left, several of them came to him and requested him to explain the parable more fully to them. Booah told them if they treasured up the tracts in their hearts then they would be like the good ground.

The hired men are becoming considerably interested in singing. I teach them every evening except when we have meetings.

I have now three young men under my care learning English. The name of one is "Pome." He is placed under our care by Chao Fah Yi, one of the principal priests. The name of another is "Tup." He is Coon Sit's wife's brother. The third who began today calls himself "Mit." My teacher's name is "Same." I give him six dollars a month.

Jan. 23rd Went with Dr. Bradley this morning to the Prak Klang to vaccinate his children. He has never yet succeeded in getting another from America to work here, and therefore in order to mitigate the effects of the smallpox, inoculation for it was sometime since introduced. When we left Boston we took with us some of the vaccine matter very carefully put up in vials and we have some faint hope that it will succeed. The smallpox is now very prevalent in some parts of the city – I staid [sic] about an hour and some 8 or 10 of the Prak Klang's little ones vaccinated. Fifteen or 20 of his wives were present. How many more he has, I know not – while on our way I saw a woman weaving under a little shed. The loom had all the parts of an American loom except a yarn beam – reed, harness, treadles, and shuttle.

Jan. 29th Have been engaged most of the day in whitewashing the house which we expect [to] occupy. As we had no whitewash brushes, I put my knowledge of flax breaking into requisition and prepared some brushes which [as were?] a very good purpose by breaking and driving the husk of the coconut lining. Lime is easily obtained here that which we are using is made by burning clam and other shells. Rock lime is also to be had.

This evening the weekly conference was at Dr. Robinson's. I believe I had said that the members of the two missions meet together in this meeting and also on Sabbath evening. There is a delightful state of union existing between the two missions.

Feb. 1st 1840 Sat. evening. This has been a busy day. Br. Hemenway have been busily engaged in moving. We are now quietly settled in our own hired house. Nothing but a canal separates our door yard from Dr. Bradley's. We moved by putting our things in a boat and then rowing over and landing them on the stairs which lead from the canal up into our door yard. Our house is one of the few in Bangkok shingled with tiles. All the native and some of the mission houses are covered with chak which is something like the flag of America.

Feb. 3rd Just returned from Dr. Slafter's where the Mon. concert was held. In almost all the houses we past we saw [gambling ?]. The reason is that today is … first of the Chinese new year and for [?] days now… [end of journal]